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NOTES

THE LIVELIHOOD OF AGRICULTURAL LABORERS IN JAPAN

The arable land of Japan proper totals 5,859,326 *cho*¹ and the total number of the farming families is 5,561,053 (54 per cent of the whole number of families in Japan). Land cultivation by them may be classified as follows:

AREAS CULTIVATED PER FARMER'S FAMILY

	Number	Per Cent
Under 2 <i>cho</i>	4,985,606	89.65
Over 2 <i>cho</i>	575,447	10.35
Total	5,561,053	100

As this table shows, the number of the farming families of the second sort in the table is comparatively small. Moreover, a large portion of the farming of Japan depends upon the labor of the family members of the first sort in the table, and when needing more labor than that of the members of each family—e.g., in case of the rice transplantation—the neighbors mutually aid themselves, supplying one another with the labor of their family members. Therefore the number of the wage-earners in agriculture is very small.

But those who are engaged in all sorts of farming and subsidiary occupations such as sericulture, tea-picking, charcoal-burning, starch-making, etc., and some tenants earning wages in the spare hours of their own farm work, aggregating 1,200,000 in the number of families, must also be taken into account.

The laborers of these families are employed as day laborers by one farmer after another in their native hamlets, or as one's special employees in the farmer's busy seasons and on other occasions. For their dwellings some of them rent humble cottages with small pieces of land for garden purposes, not having their own houses, to say nothing of their own fields to till.

¹ The statistics are taken from the *Report of the Department of Agriculture and Commerce for 1918*. 1 *cho* = 2.45 acres.

The following tables show the condition of the life of the agricultural wage-earners in Japan, a result of my recent investigation of a family budget in the central part of the mainland of Japan.

MEMBERS OF THE FAMILY

	Age
Master	43
Wife	38
Daughter	13
Son	9

ANNUAL INCOME

	Yen
Husband's earning for 200 days	400.00
Wife's earning as a season hired laborer for 137 days between the middle of May and the end of September, the busy season of the year in agriculture. (Her wage is 0.75 yen a day excluding meals.)	102.00
Wife's earning in her jobs such as washing, weeding, etc., for 100 days	50.00
Yield of the kitchen garden	12.00
Sale of fagots.	15.00
Total	579.00

ANNUAL EXPENDITURE

Items	Amounts Yen
Subsistence:	
Rice	184.50
Miso (bean paste)	24.00
Soy	20.00
Fish	12.00
Vegetables	17.80
Sugar and sundries	5.00
Tofu (bean curds)	1.00
Salt	2.30
	<hr/>
	266.60
Clothing	37.20
Rent	40.00
Firing and lighting:	
Electric light	6.60
Firewoods	15.00
Charcoal	12.00
	<hr/>
	33.60

	Amounts <i>Yen</i>	<i>Yen</i>
Education, public worship, etc.:		
Education	5.00	
Congratulatory gifts	10.00	
Contributions to shrines	10.00	
Obituary gifts	5.00	
Handsels and biannual presents	3.60	
Festivals	1.00	
	<hr/>	34.60
Tax:		
Prefectural house rate	0.20	
Village surtax	5.80	
	<hr/>	6.00
Care of the person:		
Care of health	10.00	
Barber's charges	5.00	
	<hr/>	15.00
Comfort, mental and bodily recreation:		
<i>Sake</i> (liquor)	146.00	
Tobacco	12.00	
Cakes	5.00	
Entrance money	0.40	
	<hr/>	163.40
Total		596.40
Balance		
Deficit		17.40

In the following table of percentages are included 64.40 *yen*, added to the item of the subsistence, for the cost of meals in 137 days (0.47 *yen* per day) which the employer provides for the wife.

	<i>Yen</i>	Per Cent
Subsistence	331.00	50.2
Clothing	37.20	5.6
Lodging	40.00	6.0
Firing and lighting	33.60	5.1
Education, public worship, etc.	34.60	5.2
Tax	6.00	0.9
Care of health	15.00	2.3
Comfort, mental and bodily recreation	163.40	24.7
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Total	660.80	100.00

The table will show you how bitter is the economic condition of the family life. Especially, women's lot—with only one opportunity in a year to see a rustic play—is much harder than that of men, who enjoy far greater opportunities for pleasure. The reader, for instance, may be surprised to see in the table the comparatively large expense (146 *yen* a year) for 58.4 gallons of *sake*, which means 4 *go* or 0.16 gallon per day. But according to the investigation of the *Nippon Kinshu-kai* (the temperance society of Japan), the average amount of the liquor consumed by a man aged above 15 in Japan is 1.5613 *koku* (61 gallons and fractions) a year, 4.337 *go* or 0.1735 gallons per day.

So you see, compared with this report, the sum in the table is not large. We must remember, moreover, that though the cause of poverty of the agricultural wage-earners of Japan lies on the above-mentioned disproportionately large expense of *sake*, at the same time to drink is the sole source of comfort and pleasure of their life.

As to the excess of the expenditure over the income by 17.40 *yen* in our table, *Dai-Nippon No-kai* (the agricultural society of Japan) reports that in 32 per cent of the cases of farmers running into debt in Japan the cause lies in the too hard pressing of their living. In fact, they too often have no money to pay their rent.

I have taken the foregoing description as an example, by which to show a picture of the general condition of the agricultural laborers in Japan.

The reader will perhaps think the description too unscientific. The following table of wages in various parts of Japan proper, which is the result of my investigation at the end of November of this year (1920), will tell you something in this connection.

Localities	Wages <i>Yen</i>
<i>Hokkaido</i>	2.00 (meals inclusive)
<i>Aomori-ken</i>	1.50 (meals inclusive)
<i>Iwate-ken</i>	1.50 (meals inclusive)
<i>Nagano-ken</i>	1.40 (meals exclusive)
<i>Saitama-ken</i>	0.90 (meals exclusive)
<i>Chiba-ken</i> (<i>Katori-gori</i>)	1.40 (meals exclusive)
<i>Aichi-ken</i>	2.00 (meals inclusive)
<i>Kioto-fu</i> (<i>Kamo-mura</i>)	2.30 (meals inclusive)
<i>Kagawa-ken</i> (<i>Shikoku</i>)	1.20 (meals exclusive)
<i>Fukuoka-ken</i> (<i>Kyushu</i>)	1.50 (meals inclusive except breakfast)

NOTE.—The wages will be paid in money, and sometimes money and meals.

According to a certain landlord's estimate, meal cost is 0.47 *yen* a day for each laborer, so the table may be re-written as follows:

LOCALITIES	WAGE		
	In Money Yen	In Meals Yen	Total Yen
<i>Hokkaido</i>	2.00		2.00
<i>Aomori-ken</i>	1.50		1.50
<i>Iwate-ken</i>	1.50		1.50
<i>Nagano-ken</i>	1.40	0.47	1.87
<i>Saitama-ken</i>	0.90	0.47	1.37
<i>Chiba-ken</i>	1.40	0.47	1.87
<i>Aichi-ken</i>	2.00		2.00
<i>Kioto-fu</i>	2.30		2.30
<i>Kagawa-ken</i>	1.20	0.47	1.67
<i>Fukuoka-ken</i>	1.50	0.35	1.85
Total			17.93
Average			1.793

Thus driven by the very miserable condition, the centralization movement to the urban districts is much in evidence among them so that landlords are experiencing greater difficulties.

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